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Intelligence Information Special Report

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Assuring Continuity in Military Shipments
Under Conditions of Widespread Destruction
on the Transportation Lines of a Front
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Assuring Continuity in Military Shipments Under
Conditions of Widespread Destruction on the
Transportation Lines of a Front
by
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In examining questions of materiel support to front troops in an offensive operation under conditions in which rail deliveries have been suspended, General-Mayor V. Yuryev touched upon a number of pressing issues in his article.*

Although basically agreeing with the author's conclusions and proposals, we would like to express some opinions on the questions of the organization of temporary transshipment areas.

As the experience of a number of front command-staff exercises conducted in the military district shows, the advance preparation of separate temporary transshipment areas (two or three per military district) in the most "congested" areas of a road network, and the implementation of general measures for increasing the viability of transportation lines do not assure the continuity of transport.

As is known, in some border military districts there are railroads with an operating length of thousands of kilometers. Along these railroads are several thousand man-made structures, including bridges more than 100 meters long and a large number of tunnels.

If to these man-made structures are added hydrotechnical structures which represent a potential threat to transportation lines (the widespread destruction of dams causes catastrophic flooding of large areas and the wash-out of transportation lines), then the answer to both questions raised becomes quite apparent: the temporary transshipment areas prepared in peacetime will probably not be able to fulfil the tasks assigned to them with sufficient comprehensiveness; and concerning the number of these structures, it is considerably less than the number of possible "barriers".

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*Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", 1966, No 2 (78).

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Furthermore, these temporary transshipment areas are intended for use only on the railroads at the same time that "barrier areas" can also appear on the transportation lines of other types of transport.

The number of "barrier areas" will also not decrease in territories seized from the enemy during an offensive by our troops.

The question arises: how can we assure the continuity of transport not only in our territory, but also in the territory formerly occupied by the enemy? It appears to us that the primary resolution of this question can be achieved by establishing complexes of mobile temporary transshipment areas in the military districts.

In suggesting that the temporary transshipment areas now in existence on the railroads be supplemented with a system of mobile temporary transshipment areas, we are specifically basing our suggestion on the fact that mobile temporary transshipment areas will not be tied to a particular territory and, for this reason, will be able to "serve" not only the railroads but also other "barrier areas" of the front transport network.

As an example, we will examine a mountain-maritime theater of military operations.

Here, railroads and roads are hemmed in by mountain chains and, as a rule, pass through gorges and mountain passes in parallel lines, intersecting on the way a great number of mountain rivers; there are a considerable number of tunnels, bridges, viaducts, retaining walls, and other man-made structures. Under these conditions "barrier areas" can be formed to the same extent on both railroads and roads.

In connection with the possible destruction of ports and moorings on coastal axes, loading operations must often be transferred to roadsteads and unprepared coasts. Under these conditions, mobile temporary transshipment areas can facilitate, and often even completely resolve, the problem of assuring the continuity of transport.

It should be mentioned that, in our opinion, with the availability of temporary transshipment areas in combination with mobile temporary transshipment areas, railroads will not be an "auxiliary type of transport", as General-Mayor V. Yuryev describes them, but will be one of the principal types in the complex of transport means employed to supply the needs of a front.

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The experience of recent command-staff exercises conducted in our military district demonstrated that the establishment of mobile temporary transshipment areas is completely possible and advisable. The areas were formed from rear front bases, reinforced with the forces and means of the Directorate of Rocket Troops and Artillery, of air defense, of the air army, and of the special rear services units and subunits.

A similar task, although on a somewhat smaller scale, was also repeatedly accomplished at front command-staff exercises, for example, during the transport of rocket troops, missiles, and missile propellant.

Before the beginning of the operation a special plan was formed for the organization of the transport of missiles and missile propellant through "barrier areas". This plan was developed by the chief of the Military Transportation Service of the front in coordination with the chief of rocket troops and artillery, the fuel supply department, and the commander of the air army; it was signed by the deputy troop commander for the rear, and was approved by the front troop commander.

In accordance with the plan, on both sides of the "barrier areas" the necessary forces and means were concentrated in advance for the organization of the work of the temporary transshipment areas for the transport of missiles and special propellants around areas of destruction.

As the experience of exercises has shown, such a method greatly facilitates the resolution of problems of the organization of continuity in the transport of missiles and missile propellant when there is widespread destruction on transportation lines. The most important fact is that the proposed system of mobile temporary transshipment areas is not tied to a particular "barrier area" and can quickly deploy in a required area when necessary.

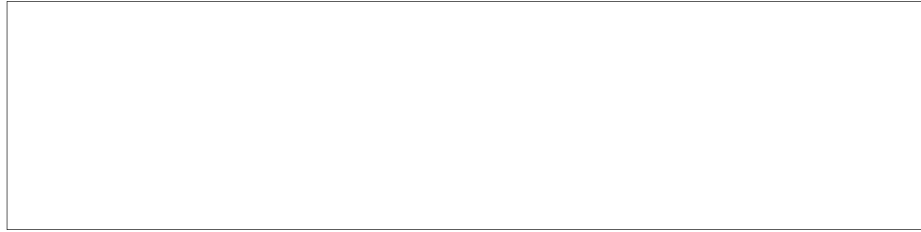
The mobile temporary transshipment area complex must correspond to the physical-geographic conditions and to the development of transportation lines in the area being covered.

In our view, the most desirable, general-purpose complex will be one containing forces and means for: the preparation and maintenance of the road network and water obstacle crossings; assuring the transport of missiles, warheads and missile propellant; the transfer of fuel; the implementation of transshipping and engineer work; and the organization of communications. For this reason it can be assumed that a mobile temporary transshipment area must have up to one separate road-traffic control

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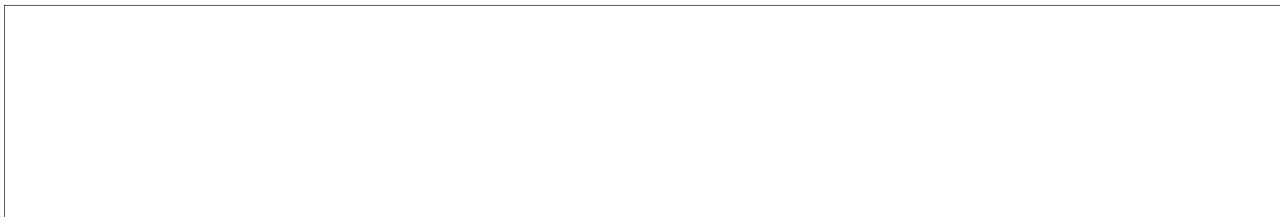
battalion, up to two batteries from a separate missile park battalion, one special propellant supply platoon, motor transport and pipeline units, and servicing and communications units.

Helicopters and trailers should be allocated according to need.

As calculations and the experience of exercises show, when one or two organic temporary transshipment areas are available in a front during an offensive operation, it is advisable to form from two to four mobile temporary transshipment areas.

With an optimal radius of operation of 100 to 150 kilometers, such a number of mobile temporary transshipment areas in combination with stationary temporary transshipment areas set up in peacetime at very elaborate man-made structures on the railroads, will be able to cover the transportation lines of an entire front area and assure the continuity of materiel deliveries, troop movements, and casualty evacuations.

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